



State of Illinois  
JB Pritzker, Governor



Illinois Department of Transportation  
Omer Osman, Acting Secretary

---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

May 6, 2021

**CONTACT:**

Paul Wappel	217.685.0082
Maria Castaneda	312.447.1919

## Gov. Pritzker Urges Illinois to ‘Start Seeing Motorcycles’

*Annual safety campaign calls on public to remain alert during riding season*

**SPRINGFIELD** – Gov. JB Pritzker has proclaimed May as Motorcycle Awareness Month in Illinois, joining the Illinois Department of Transportation, Illinois State Police and motorcycle safety advocates to remind all users of the road to Start Seeing Motorcycles.

“We want all riders and motorists, whether they’re traveling a short distance or long distance, to reach their destination safely,” said Acting Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman.

“Warmer temperatures mean that more motorcyclists will be on the road so remember to always be alert for motorcycles and share the road.”

The Start Seeing Motorcycles campaign is important because while motorcyclists represent only 3 percent of total vehicle registrations in Illinois, they account for 14 percent of traffic fatalities. There were 1,010 traffic fatalities in Illinois in 2019, – 137 were motorcyclists, and in 2020, there were 1,193 traffic fatalities – 153 were motorcyclists, an increase of 16 from 2019. (2020 data is provisional as of May 4, 2021)

“As drivers and riders, we all have a responsibility to each other as we share the road, especially when we operate our vehicles near highly vulnerable roadway users such as motorcyclists and pedestrians,” stated Illinois State Police Director Brendan F. Kelly. “Understanding these vulnerabilities and operating with an increased awareness of each other, combined with good choices behind the wheel and handlebars is good for everyone involved. We should all be doing our part to increase roadway safety. Whether our knees are in the breeze, or we are wrapped comfortably in our vehicles, we all want to return to our loved ones at the end of each and every trip.”

Motorists should always:

- Look twice before changing lanes or merging. Use your mirrors and look over your shoulder to be sure it is safe.

- Allow appropriate distance. Traffic, weather, and road conditions require motorcyclists to react and maneuver differently. Drivers should allow motorcyclists enough space to maneuver and enough time to adjust.
- Use care when driving near a group of motorcyclists. Sharing the road with organized motorcycle groups requires patience and communication. If a driver needs to change lanes or reach an exit, they should signal their intention and wait for the riders to create space. Do not merge in between groups or riders unless there is enough space to do so safely.

Riders are urged to take precautions:

- Wear DOT-compliant gear with bright colors and retro-reflective strips or decals, over-the-ankle boots, gloves, a protective jacket, pants and a properly fitted helmet with face shield or protective eyewear.
- Get regular maintenance and take advantage of IDOT's free motorcycle safety courses. Visit [startseeingmotorcycles.org](http://startseeingmotorcycles.org) for more information.
- Give yourself space and time to react. Allow space for emergency braking and for avoiding a crash. Make lane changes gradually and expect the unexpected.
- Ride Sober. Motorcycle riding, alcohol and cannabis don't mix. They slow your reaction time, affect your balance, coordination and vision, and may increase your risk of crashing.

Start Seeing Motorcycles is made possible by the teamwork among IDOT, ISP, Gold Wing Road Riders Association, A Brotherhood Aimed Towards Education (ABATE) and other organizations that promote motorcycle education, awareness and safety.

During the riding season, Start Seeing Motorcycles banners and yard signs will be on display throughout the state, reminding the public to always stay alert for motorcycles.

###